

Hay bales burn

Saturday, 05 October 2013 10:27



Firefighters work Friday night to keep the hay-bale fire contained during the wind at the Heifer Source facility located at 14826 Road 4 east of Liberal. Loader operators were moving and trying to save as many round bales of hay as they could. This hay bale fire Friday evening and Saturday is similar to one which happened July 14 at the same facility east of Liberal. Dozens of firefighters battled the blaze throughout Friday night, and several crews were called back to the scene early Saturday after flying ember re-ignited another stack of bales. Winds were gusting to 30 mph throughout the battle. L&T photo/Chris Linenbroker

By LARRY PHILLIPS

• Leader & Times

More than two dozen firefighters worked through Friday night and into Saturday battling a hay-bale blaze at the Heifer Source facility located at 14826 Road 4 east of Liberal. It's the second such fire in three months.

More than 4,000 bales were consumed in the early stages of the fire, according to Seward

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County Fire Chief Mike Rice.

“At 1842 hours (6:42 p.m.) on Friday, Seward County Fire Department was dispatched to a hay stack fire in the 14000 Block of Road 4,” Rice noted in a statement released at 3:30 a.m. Saturday. “As of 0315 hours on Saturday, around 4,500 bales were involved in the fire.”

Some four hours after Rice’s first report, he sent word more bales caught fire before daylight Saturday.

“An additional 1,700 hundred bales (caught) fire from blowing embers,” Rice reported. “(We) recalled help from Turpin, Tyrone and Liberal Fire at 7:43 a.m. Saturday.”

Seward County Fire initially dispatched three pumper trucks four brush trucks and a dozen firefighters. Assisting was Turpin Fire Department with six firefighters and three brush trucks. Tyrone Fire Department sent two brush trucks, a water tanker and six firemen, and Baker Road Department also provided a water tanker and a fireman.

Assistance was also on hand from Seward County Road and Bridge and the Red Cross.

“The fire is still burning and will more than likely burn most of the Saturday if not into Sunday,” Rice noted. “We have had trucks and staff on-scene since the initial call.”

Approximately 5,200 bales of cattle feed and 20 truck loads of tires went up in flames at the same site on July 12 this summer. The site is at the former location of Cattleco feed lot on Bluebell Road. The suspected cause of that fire was simultaneous combustion from high temperatures and hay that was fermenting.